DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 803 FL 020 773

AUTHOR Rannut, Mart
TITLE Beyond Linguistic Policy: The Soviet Union Versus Estonia.
INSTITUTION Roskilde Univ. Center (Denmark).
REPORT NO ISSN-0106-0821
PUB DATE Aug 91
NOTE 31p.
PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT ROLIG papir; n48 p23-52 1991

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communism; *Cultural Pluralism; Democratic Values; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; Language Attitudes; Language Maintenance; Language Planning; *Language Role; *Political Influences; *Public Policy; Russian; *Uncommonly Taught Languages; Violence
IDENTIFIERS *Estonia; USSR; USSR (Estonia)

ABSTRACT

Discussion of the role of non-Russian languages in the Soviet Union (USSR) focuses on the history of ethnic group languages and language policy in Estonia since the collapse of totalitarianism. A historical overview of Soviet Union language policy is offered, with attention given to the ideological goals influencing policy, and their realization and results. Three periods are discerned: the first characterized by urgent and violent measures used to implement Communist ideals, including elimination of whole ethnic groups; the second emphasizing homogenization and elimination of ethnic markers; and the third occurring with the introduction of "perestrojka," when ethnic and linguistic self-determination continued to be denied despite official change in policy. Three simultaneous processes are noted: increasing economic malfunction; the attempt by indigenous nations to establish political sovereignty or gain additional rights; and the attempt of indigenous nations to protect their languages and cultures. The three processes are seen as generating a crisis in the Soviet Union. Estonian linguistic policy adopted soon after the Soviet occupation in 1940 until the present is analyzed, including language attitudes among non-Estonians and language policy in education. Democracy and self-determination are seen as necessary for the solution of linguistic problems. A 20-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED352803

Beyond linguistic policy: The Soviet Union versus Estonia

MART RANNUT (Director, Estonian National Language Board, Tallinn) *

0. Introduction

In this article the tragedy of speakers of non-Russian languages in the USSR is described. Under the pressure of the imperial ideology they were forced to sacrifice linguistic rights for an ideal that is no more than an attempt at linguistic genocide. Due to the collapse of the totalitarian regime, new linguistic policies which protect local languages have been introduced.

In the first part, a historical overview is given of the linguistic policy of the Soviet Union. Attention is paid to the ideological goals influencing linguistic policy, to their realisation, and to the results obtained. Although the linguistic policy of the Soviet Union is an implicit phenomenon, three main periods may be observed, each differing in the methods that were used to achieve ideological goals. Prior to these periods there was no clear overall policy or means, due to the unresolved struggle for power in the Soviet leadership.

The first period, during Stalin's regime, was characterized by urgent and violent measures employed in order to bring Communist ideals to life. These measures

---

*An earlier version af this paper was given as a guest lecture at Roskilde University Center on February 25, 1991.
This version was completed in August 1991. A revised version is to appear in a book on linguistic human rights that Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson are currently editing.

FL 020 773

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
H. Haberland
BEST COPY AVAILABLE
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

involved the elimination of whole ethnic groups using a class-based approach. During the second period — post-Stalinism — less violence was used, while emphasis was placed upon rebuilding human nature and eliminating ethnic markers. A special type of education called "international education" was created, and in extreme cases, citizens were sent to psychiatric hospitals and prisons. This period, now referred to as "stagnation", was mainly associated with the name of Leonid Brezhnev. The third period began when M. Gorbachov came to power. To escape the impasse, *perestrojka* was introduced. Nevertheless, the ideal of the Soviet Union as a Communist empire was maintained, although glasnost was allowed. In other words, there was a delay in taking measures: in a departure from Stalinist linguistic policy, pure and righteous Leninist policy was propagated, but without success. As the right to self-determination was denied (it would be fatal for the empire), ethnic and linguistic conflicts increased, among them a new tension between imperial-minded *homines sovetici* (directed from the centre of the USSR) and the local nations fighting for their cultures, languages and the right of self-determination.

Thus three main processes may be observed simultaneously, each influencing one other: 1) increasing economic malfunctioning accompanied by general chaos; 2) the attempt by indigenous nations to establish political sovereignty or to gain additional political rights for their home territories; and 3) the attempt of indigenous nations to protect their languages and cultures. What is implied in the third process is that languages other than Russian must be promoted in the Soviet Union in territories where there are native speakers of such languages. This goal can be advanced by the passing of language laws. Such legislation regulates the use of the local language and Russian.

These three factors have together generated a crisis in the Soviet Union. Soviet propaganda wants to camouflage it with reference to 'ethnic conflicts' and claims that in most cases it is speakers of Russian as a mother tongue who are discriminated against. To illustrate this last point, the example of Estonia will be analyzed, from the linguistic policy adopted in Estonia soon after the Soviet occupation in 1940, up to the present time.

1. Theory

1.1 Phase I: No person, no problem

One of the most widespread postulates of Soviet ideology has been the claim that the problem of ethnicity ("national question") was solved long ago in the Soviet Union, and that there are, and will never be, ethnic or linguistic conflicts between nations or between the central government and these nations. Recent developments have shown this claim to be false. There are several reasons for this, among them the structure of the Soviet Union — a multinational empire, formed by force on the ruins of tzarist Russia and maintained by violence. There is another reason — the unnatural political boundaries between ethnic groups, that compulsorily unite some nations and ethnic groups, while separating others (for example Central Asia, Karabakh).

There are at least two reasons why Soviet linguistic policy has only been an implicit one. In the first place, an explicit Soviet linguistic policy never existed per se, as it has merely been one dimension of Soviet Communist ideology. Secondly, this implicit policy has never been stable: it has tended to reflect the views of the current General Secretary of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union). These opinions were spread through fresh CP documents, always backed up by appropriate quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin. Nevertheless, some general principles influencing linguistic policy may be mentioned:

1) *the primacy of class over ethnicity*, according to which the logical outcome of the class struggle (which serves as the motor of historical development), is that the most progressive class — the proletariat — must rule society. During the time of the October Revolution, the attempt to introduce such a class-based approach led to the primacy of one million proletarians (the ideologically conscious in Petrograd and Moscow) over 140 million non-proletarians, and further, that the Communist Party apparatus — "the leading and directing force of the society and the vanguard of the proletariat" — reigned over all others. While converting this theory into practice, the dictatorship of the proletariat became a euphemism for terror and a

totalitarian regime. A violent hierarchical structure kept citizens under control and surveillance. As the primacy of class over ethnicity is the necessary, as well as the sufficient condition for a happy society, manifold hierarchies (e.g. those based on ethnic, linguistic or cultural markers, as well as "foreign bodies" such as churches, remnants of other classes and survivals of the pluralistic society were eliminated (cf. ethnicity in the West)). Ethnicity in its turn was described as a temporary phenomenon and an inherent feature of capitalism, generated by the capitalist form of production and doomed to perish with capitalism.

2) *the approach of Communism as an objective inevitability and historically progressive process*. Communism as the most perfect order of the society has several features, including general happiness and freedom, the absence of state, police and prisons, as well as nations and ethnic groups, and the introduction of monolingualism.

Expediency is a universal human vice, even when aiming for positive goals. So it is understandable that during the reign of Stalin (1924–1953) the goal of reaching Communism within the period of one generation meant using severe measures to carry out the policy, including executions, and Gulag facilities. Thus, according to the first principle of the class-based approach, the state, led by ideological principles, turned against the enemy of the working class — in reality it meant the persecution of intellectuals, including Russian intellectuals. According to the second principle, the state handicapped and eliminated all sorts of nationalists who tried to maintain their native language even in the dawn of Communism (see Nutt 1989).

Very little attention was paid to human rights. In fact, an individual had no place in history or in society except as defined in a set of societal relations, which operated according to the principle of class struggle. These relations were first and foremost economic. In the process of eliminating harmful or unnecessary relations, whole nations and ethnic groups were deported and persecuted, including the Kalmyk, the Ingrians, the Cherkes, the Chechen, the Ingush, the Balkar, the Meshi, the Crimean Tartars, the Volga Germans, etc. The fewer the number of

languages that remain, the nearer one is to Communism. The solution could not be the substitution of the one language by another, but the elimination of the whole ethnic structure, achieved with the help of migrational flows, deportations, the mechanical mixing of people at the workplace, and even through mixed marriages.

1.2 Phase II: Persons without ethnicity

After Stalin's death, the second period of linguistic policy began. During this, less violence was used, and as an alternative, new theoretical concepts were introduced. As the ethnic element restricts free development, one may exterminate the factors which maintain a person's nation and language, instead of eliminating the person him- or herself. Two phases were claimed to operate for languages under socialism — the first phase of communism was *sbliženie* ("convergence"), the second *slijanie* ("assimilation"). This represents the replacement of physical violence by psychological or symbolic violence, a progression from the use of sticks to carrots and ideas (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988).

The developments outlined below were regarded as coming about particularly due to the assumed advantages of socialism, and its influence on linguistic policy. Medvedyev (1986: 95) cites the following:

1) the convergence of languages and the mutual enrichment of cultures,

2) languages became stylistically diverse (especially when compared to the period of illiteracy),

3) several writers published their works in Russian instead of in their native languages,

4) phoneme inventories were enriched by new phonemes (e.g. the Kirgiz language was enriched by /f/ when the capital of Kirgizia was named "Frunze" in honour of a famous Russian revolutionary).

There are, of course, some constraints in applying the advantages of socialism to language, as pointed out by Desheriyev (1982:95): "Though language in Soviet society carries an important ideological function, in Soviet philosophical and linguistic literature it has been proven that language by its nature is a non-class-based phenomenon".

This was a great leap forward from Academician N. Marr's stadial theory (belonging to the ideology of Stalin's time), linking languages to appropriate socio-economic formations.

To strengthen the positive tendencies in society, the Communist Party-based Leninist ethnolinguistic policy was proposed, which assumed the following (Desheriyev 1982:12):

1) the absolute equality of languages;

2) the creation of necessary conditions for the evolution and mutual enrichment of languages;

3) an unlimited use of national languages in all spheres;

4) a guarantee of bilingualism — one's native language and the use of Russian as an instrument of brotherly cooperation between the nations of the SU;

5) the consistent implementation of national-international cross-fertilization, enrichment and convergence, as well as the development of a common Soviet culture;

6) the replenishment of the lexical fund of the languages of the SU nations (cf. Academician Y. Trubachov's theory in Hint 1990).

All the aforementioned assumptions require the internationalization of all spheres of society. Internationalization (*internacionalizatsija*) has been a directed

and controlled process, that has been influenced by political, economic, ideological, as well as by purely propagandistic means. The goal, according to the program of the CPSU from 1961, has been to unify the nations — a common economy, common communist features, and a common international culture. This has been implemented by means of the so-called international education (*internacional'noe vospitanie*), including the following subjects: the theory of the national question and propaganda for the cooperation of the Soviet Union nations, the inculcation of new international traditions, explanations of the nature of proletarian internationalism, propaganda concerning the importance of the Russian language, sharing the (positive) experiences of multinational working parties, the creation of the feeling of belonging to the family of the Soviet peoples, and the struggle against the phenomena of (linguistic) chauvinism and nationalism (Metelitsa 1982). Other researchers have added the following topics: the strictly scientific and consistently class-based interpretation of the history of nations, the advantages of socialism in solving national problems, the exposition of the bourgeois falsifications of the national policy of the CPSU and history of the USSR (see Kandimaa 1989).

The main objective of such an education was to produce brainwashed and trustworthy people who had no roots and no ethnic preferences. At the 24th CPSU Congress, these people were given a beautiful name: the Soviet people, having three characteristic features: 1) embodying Marxist-Leninist ideology, 2) having the goal of building Communism, hence 3) supporting non-ethnicity (see Nutt 1989). This new man, born of the Soviet totalitarian regime, is called *homo soveticus*. Other significant symptoms: an address in the Soviet Union, being free of nation and culture, and in place of democracy, a struggle for a socialist democracy, always thinking as a "*tovarišč*" does, and speaking the language of the future Communist society, Russian, the "international language" (*jazyk mežnacionalnogo obščenija*).

In the 1920s, the chief propagandists spread the theory of the export of Communism, according to which all countries by chain reaction would soon become socialist. The dominant view was that in this scenario, the language would

certainly be one based on the Latin alphabet, but opinions differed with regard to a certain language. For example L. Trotzky, Chief-of-Arms of Soviet Russia, promoted the learning of Esperanto and even demanded knowledge of it from his officers up until the year 1923.

During the 1920s, the Latin alphabet was introduced for languages which were either not alphabetised or used a non-cyrillic alphabet (the entire literacy campaign aimed at spreading Communist ideology and converting people to Communism). But as this export theory failed in practice, in the 1930s it was the Russian language that was chosen to fulfill this historic task. This period marks the beginning of the rise of the status of Russian as *prima inter pares* in order to guarantee effective communication and cooperation in the political, cultural, and economic spheres. The reasons advanced for this were the following: Russian is spoken by Russians, who form approximately one-half of the population of the USSR; fraternal cooperation takes place via this language; the Russian people have liberated other peoples and have provided them with fraternal help, common historical traditions, as well as a major part of the Russian culture and science with which to develop the culture of these other nations; Russian is one of the most developed world languages, as it is the language of current scientific, cultural and technological cooperation, and international communication (Desheriyev 1982: 44). In addition, Russian has several unique functions, being the native language of Russians, and it is the freely chosen international language of the peoples of the USSR, as well of the countries of the socialist friendship union. This language contains the richest literature on Marxism-Leninism, as well as on the socialist economic, cultural, and linguistic construction experiences of the USSR, which are of direct concern to the countries of the Third World (Desheriyev 1982: 47). To reach the inevitable Communism, Russians must keep their language alive and thriving. For non-Russians, the only remaining option is the exchange of their native languages for Russian through voluntary self-assimilation (Khanazarov 1982).

The temporary solution proposed during L. Brezhnev's reign, now referred to as "stagnation" (*zastoj*), was named Russian-national bilingualism (*nacional'no-*

ruskoje dvujazyčie). According to this doctrine, Russian operates as "the second native language" for those Soviet citizens not having it as their first language. The "national" native language, unsuitable for scientific and technological purposes, as well as an obstacle to the scientific progress of the USSR (Kulichenko 1981:425) was ascribed the functions that Russian could not fulfill (e.g. national folklore). As a result, a two-level linguistic empire was formed, where all the languages were equal, and knowledge of Russian as a *lingua franca* was obligatory. In reality, this meant diglossia, as the Soviet top administration and diplomacy, as well as the compulsory military service and optional prison detainment required the exclusive use of Russian. Such well-organized russification resulted in the death of approximately seventy languages during the existence of the USSR. These languages have perished; their speakers "surpassed national isolation", and switched to Russian. While the census of 1926 recorded 194 distinct ethnic units, the 1989 census revealed that the current number is only 128. In the Soviet Union, education (at least instruction in one's native language) is provided in 40 languages, and higher education is offered in 5 languages.

The entire education system is oriented toward the empire-minded Moscow-centered view (e.g. in history, literature). Native language instruction is displaced by education in Russian. "National" schools are forced to close down. To raise the status of Russian in everyday life, national territories were colonized internally by nominating Russians to top positions in non-Russian areas (for example, in 1988 in Moldavia 85% of directors and senior managers were non-Moldavians). In the process of "denationalizing the ethnic environment", the concept of Russian as "the older brother" was also introduced. A new, international non-ethnic culture was created: national in form, but socialist in content. This socialist realism-based Soviet culture was directly controlled by the Communist party. Being a subculture, predominantly based on Russian culture, it was a suitable channel for unifying various national traditions by enriching them with socialist advances.

2. Reality

2.1 The all-union linguistic situation

Due to ideological pressure, accompanied by measures restricting the functional use of "national" languages and lowering their status, languages in the Soviet Union operate within the society with different levels of success. Politically, these languages enjoy different privileges depending on the political status of the ethnic territories of their speakers. Up to the year 1991 ethnic territories in the Soviet Union were divided into 5 categories: the Federal Republic (Russia), Republics (14), Autonomous Republics (20), Autonomous (or National) Areas and Districts (18), and ethnic territories with no political status. The functioning of the language within these territories may be described with the help of the scheme proposed by Denison (1977: 21).

$$A \longrightarrow AI/BII \longrightarrow BI/AII \longrightarrow B$$

where "B" is the ousting Russian language, and "A" the ousted "national" languages, and where "I" indicates the dominant, and "II" the lesser degree of functioning in the society.

The first "A" is where the language doesn't suffer under the functional pressure of another language, and where other languages operate marginally in the area concerned. "A" is thus represented in the Soviet Union by only one language — the international language Russian on the territory of Russia (autonomous and national territories excluded). Due to its ideological role, Russian has become the main evicter of other languages from the ethnic territories of their speakers. All the other languages, being minority languages as compared to Russian, belong to the next stages of language decay. The second stage AI/BII may be characterized by migrational processes, an abrupt increase in language contacts, ideological pressure, and by a lexical offensive that carries phonetic changes with it. The local language must give up the most prestigious functional areas. In the USSR, the Baltic and Caucasian Republics, the Ukraine and, perhaps Moldavia (or Moldova)

belong to this stage.

The Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were annexed by the USSR in 1940. After that, "the national cadres" were mostly deported to Siberia, or to the Far North, or just killed, and in their places, Russians were brought in, in accordance with a programme for boosting the economy of periphery areas. Thus the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic comprises from one-fifth to one-half of the population. Nevertheless, the local languages function almost equally with Russian in the "national" communities.

In the Caucasian republics, local languages do not enjoy as high a status as in the Baltic states, but due to the demographic situation (the Russian-speaking population is represented marginally), the marginalised languages have continued undeterred in areas where there have been no resources for the alien language offensive. For example, the Ukrainian language may be revived using the national potential of the Western Ukraine. A more difficult situation may be observed in Moldavia. The Moldavians who speak Romanian (the Moldavian language is a socialist invention to justify the occupation of the territory in 1940) live mostly in rural areas, whereas the towns are mainly russified. Nevertheless, through democratic developments (Moldavians form three-fifths of the population), full rights for the Romanian language may be achieved.

The third stage — BI/AII — represents the situation where the language being attacked has its functional positions weakened fatally. Even if support for the alien language has limits, counteracting it effectively would require extra vigilance. The local language is ousted step-by-step from all functional areas, and finally from its home. With the loss of each function, the status of the language decreases correspondingly. Due to the degeneration of the language, passivity as regards national problems appears, and cultural memory, traditional group relations based on language, culture, and ethnicity, are all lost. If the *status quo* language situation continues, it will lead to language death. This applies to languages of the Soviet Union that belong to territories with some kind of national political status. It is mainly the case of groups which are a demographic minority

in their homeland, though exceptions may be found (e.g. Komi-Permyak is spoken by three-fifths of the population of the Komi-Permyak National Area).

The fourth stage, "B", is a result of diglossia, where the victim language has lost all functions, and is spoken marginally by bilinguals, or by none at all. In the Soviet Union, this stage is represented by 70 languages operating peripherally, among them the Finno-Ugric languages Liv, Vot and Ingrian (less than 20 speakers). For example the last speaker of Kamas died in 1985. Language revival is impossible at this stage, even if great resources were available.

In addition to indigenous languages, the Soviet Union is rich in migrant languages, spoken by 60 million people, due to the strong encouragement of massive migration. Being mostly the *homines sovetici* of the future, migrants enjoy special privileges (e.g. being awarded state-owned flats without queueing). But as the cultural autonomy system was eliminated by Soviet power, and native language education is not available, the non-Russian migrants are assimilated to the Russian community by the second generation (see Viikberg 1990). Several migrant languages are spoken in the territory where their speakers were deported by Stalin's orders, which has led to some of the current ethnolinguistic conflicts. Russians, making up two thirds of the migrant population, came to non-Russian areas voluntarily, in order to introduce socialist order, and to fight against nationalists. As Russian intellectuals were not interested in these missionary activities, the Russian-speaking migrant communities consist, for the most part, of proletarians who are uninterested in the local culture and language. In the absence of stimuli for contact with the local culture, strong pro-communist views suppose that the local people will forget their linguistic and cultural habits, and soon assimilate, and not vice versa.

2.2 Phase III: Gorbachov's *perestrojka*

Some improvement in linguistic policy has taken place during the years of *perestrojka* and *glasnost'*, initiated by the current Soviet leader M. Gorbachov. The reason for the new political course is the catastrophic economic situation,

induced by the CPSU. Out of dire necessity, *perestrojka* also reached humanitarian spheres (*glasnost'*), though the original intention was to improve the economy only, and to keep the *status quo* in other spheres. Due to the liberalization tendencies, political repression was relaxed, enabling local nations to take measures to save their languages and cultures, and even to dream about their possible independence. Facing an entirely new situation, the official imperial ideology stopped preaching the most unpopular slogans, thus also influencing the linguistic policy. However, the main postulates remained the same, receiving only cosmetic revision:

1) language unity (i.e. monolingualism) will be established in the more distant future (rather than the near future),

2) Stalin spoiled the right national policy proposed by Lenin, therefore Lenin's heritage in national policy must be restored,

3) Russian as the international language must have the highest status in the Soviet Union, though local languages may be legally protected,

4) the Soviet Union represents a happy, multinational society with minor ethnic and linguistic conflicts that are solved easily by SU leadership (instead of the previous claim that the USSR was a multinational country without ethnic and linguistic conflicts).

As the main postulate of keeping the Soviet empire together with legislative and executive power in the hands of CP officials was highly unpopular, several legal and political conflicts arose. Using the central government's loss of influence in the economy (ruled by the Council of Ministers of the USSR) as well as in ideology (ruled by the CPSU), most of the Republics took steps to gain more freedom in economic as well as in humanitarian policy. The following three factors were involved in influencing linguistic policy:

1) the economic crash, masked by the "*perestrojka*" slogan. As a reaction to this,

the creation of an "every man for himself" economic policy in the regions of the SU led to a more autonomous policy in various regions in the SU;

2) ideological "revisionism" in the form of *glasnost'*, verbal clashes between representatives of the "Old Bolshevik" line and those of the Russian democrats. Here was an opportunity to use ideological chaos as a means of distancing oneself from the SU's ideology and, by this means, gaining additional political rights (in the case of indigenous peoples, e.g. Yakut) or full *sovereignty* (in the case of occupied territories, e.g. the Baltic and Caucasus republics, Moldava);

3) with increased economic and ideological freedom that promoted a democratic movement, steps were taken by local authorities to terminate the discrimination of languages other than Russian and to protect all cultures. Such policies inevitably led to conflict with the Russian-speaking population, who interpreted the laws restricting the privileges of the Russian language as a discriminatory step.

Thus, language laws were adopted in most of the Republics, the chronological order of adoption reflecting the prestige of the local language on the one hand, and the power of pro-Union communities on the other: Estonia (18 January 1989), Lithuania (language decree, 25 January 1989), Latvia (5 May 1989), Tadzhikistan (2 August 1989), Moldova (1 September 1989), Uzbekistan (21 September 1989), Kazakhstan (22 September 1989), Kirgizia (23 September 1989), Ukraine (3 October 1989), Belorussia (26 January 1990), Turkmenia (24 May 1990).

In Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaydzhan, the constitutional amendment declaring their respective languages to be state languages has existed since 1978, and the need for a special law was not deemed necessary. In Russia the drafting of the relevant law has not yet been completed due to severe linguistic (as well as political) struggles currently under way (e.g. in Tartarstan). Language laws have also been drafted at a subordinate political level, for example in the autonomous republics (e.g. in the Mordva ASSR).

Several legislative acts have produced side-effects as well. Thus in Moldova the language law established that the Moldavian and Romanian languages were identical, because what mainly differentiated them — use of a different alphabet — was eliminated when the enforced use of Cyrillic was annulled in the accompanying legal act, and the Latin alphabet was re-introduced. Similarly, the identity of Farsi and Tadzhik was established by the Language Law of Tadzhikistan.

All the language laws have several common features. First of all, an increase in the language rights of minorities may be noted. Whereas minority languages had earlier been totally illegitimate, using a minority language is guaranteed in the cultural domain (e.g. cultural autonomy) and in education (the right to establish educational institutions in one's native language). Among the languages obtaining such rights are Modern Hebrew, Yiddish and Romani (cf. the Moldova language law), each of which had long been marginalised, as their speakers did not sufficiently fit into Soviet ideals.

The main point in the legal acts was the redivision of the status of local and Russian languages. In most language laws, Russian was proclaimed as the international language, officially giving it the same legal rights as the local language (except for the Baltic languages). What this means is that a private individual has to be educated, administered and served in his or her local language or in Russian, according to his or her choice. However, administrative and business institutions had to switch to the local language in their contacts with others inside the Republic.

Several functional domains were not under the jurisdiction of the language laws, e.g. the Soviet Army, in some laws the KGB, and even the railways and Aeroflot, which were ruled directly from Moscow.

As a reaction to the adoption of these language laws, the central government responded by confirming the status of Russian as the official language with the highest status in the Soviet Union in the "Law of the Languages of the

USSR", adopted on 24 April 1990. This Law re-establishes the old two-level status system for languages, constraining the functional use of languages other than Russian within the framework of Russian-national bilingualism. However, due to the primacy of the laws of the Republics before All-Union ones, as well as ideological and economic chaos, this law had no significant effect at all. In conclusion, it is evident that these changes have been a tremendous step forward towards the protection of dominated languages, but due to a total lack of enforcement of the laws (except in Estonia and Lithuania), this development has mainly influenced society by serving to focus attention to an increasing extent on the status of local languages.

3. Linguistic policy in Estonia

3.1 Annexation of Estonia

The ideology of the Soviet Empire is reflected in its treatment of Estonia.

Following the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact and its Secret Protocol (known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), the Soviet Union occupied the independent states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in June 1940. The USSR had a strategic interest in the ice-free harbours of the Baltic Sea.

At that time Estonia was an independent, mainly mononational country, whose minorities (Russians, Germans, Swedes, Jews) enjoyed ample cultural autonomy. According to the 1934 census, the ethnic composition of the population of Estonia was as follows: 992,000 (88 %) Estonians, 92,000 Russians (8 %), 16,300 (1.5 %) Germans, 7,600 (0.7 %) Swedes, and 4,400 (0.4 %) Jews.

A majority of the largest minority group (Russians) lived in the rural areas, the most "Russian" areas being Narva (29.7 %), the territories East of Narva, and the Petseri region. In Tallinn the percentage of Russians was 5.7 %.

In response to an appeal from Hitler, most Germans left Estonia in October

1939.

In June 1940, 90,000 Soviet soldiers were stationed in Estonia, in addition to the 25,000 already there, in accordance with the treaty on military bases that had been imposed on Estonia in October 1939. This made the forces occupying the territory 115,000 strong, as against an Estonian army of 14,000. Most Estonian military officers, senior police officers and top civil servants were imprisoned and executed. The President of Estonia was arrested, together with his family, and deported to Russia, where he eventually died in an asylum, while part of his family died of hunger.

Estonia was proclaimed a part of the Soviet Union (6 August 1940) and named the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, and fell under the rule of the Soviet governmental apparatus and Communist Party.

The first phase, Stalinist linguistic policy, was introduced in Estonia, having a serious impact.

Firms were proclaimed to be Soviet property, the Soviet rouble became the only valid currency, and Soviet law and Stalinist terror ruled the country. On 14 June 1941, during a single campaign, more than 10,000 people were deported to Russia. Non-Communist parties and organizations were banned, all schools, societies and clubs of the ethnic minorities were closed, and cultural autonomy was eliminated.

Most journals and newpapers were closed down. Those few that survived were made heralds of Communist ideas. Access to information was channelled through the Soviet official information agency, TASS, and through Moscow Radio. The foreign press was prohibited, and foreign contacts were terminated. Individual arrests, the most common element in the sovietization policy, began from the first day of occupation, 17 June 1940. In the course of the first year of Soviet occupation (1940–41), the population of Estonia decreased by 104,000 (see Kala 1991).

World War II overrode Estonia twice. Germany conquered Estonia in 1941, and in 1944 the country was again occupied by the Soviet Union. In 1943 the Swedes left their homes in the Estonian coastal region and islands for Sweden, in conformity with a German-Swedish treaty. In 1944, before the arrival of the Soviet army, 70,000 Estonians left (mainly for Sweden and Germany), in fear of a return of the Soviet terror. Many factors contributed to a further decrease in the Estonian population, particularly war damage and deportations. The result was that by 1946, the Estonian population had decreased by one-fifth (200,000) to 854,000. 97-98 % of this decrease was accounted for by Estonian-speaking people.

3.2 The first post-war decade in Estonia

During the first post-war decade in Estonia the Stalinist policy continued.

According to the ruling ideology of that time, the "people's enemies" were crushed, using tactics of brute force towards persons of a "wrong" social background or class, and by restricting the social basis of the "hostile" class by means of industrialisation (preferential development of heavy industry, the closing down of small private firms), collectivization (creation of socialist agriculture, the ruining of private farms through the creation of collective farms), and the Literacy Campaign — although Lutheran Estonia had been over 90% literate ever since the 19th century.

Russian workers and collective farmers were invited to Estonia to fulfil their international duty, and to help to set the Estonian working-class free from "the bondage of German and English imperialists and the oppression of local capitalists". In the years 1945-1950, the number of immigrants was 0.5 million, and that of emigrants was half that amount, while natural increase was only 8,700. 170,000 non-Estonians settled permanently in Estonia, over 90 per cent of them in towns. They saw Estonia as a part of the USSR where a new way of life and the Russian language had still to be learned (Kala 1991). Their reasons for moving to Estonia were a better standard of living (there was hunger in Russia); organized recruitment (construction work, oil shale industry); privileged positions in certain

trades where Estonians were not trusted, e.g. navigation and aviation (an opportunity for Estonian nationalists to flee abroad), the railways (the risk of sabotage by nationalists), communications (state secrets), etc. Simultaneously, the oppression of Estonians continued, a reaction to which was the escape of Estonians to the woods (hence, the guerilla movement known as the "forest brothers").

The best way to manage the vast task of restructuring Estonian society was to destroy societal integrity and continuity as well as collective ethnic memory. The latter was accomplished by mass deportations of Estonians to other regions in the Soviet Union. On March 1949 over 20,000 Estonians were deported to the Far East and Siberia, the majority women and children. Many died *en route*.

To alter the collective memory, the material bearers of it were destroyed together with human ones. Approximately 30 million books (including childrens' books!) were burned. Thick volumes were fragmented with the help of an axe (see Meri 1991). At Tartu University library a special position of censor was created, a responsibility held by a monolingual Russian. Access to other materials published in independent Estonia and not used for heating purposes was severely restricted. To eliminate the blank spots in Estonian history a new version was written, describing Russians as Estonia's very peace-loving neighbours, who help Estonians re-establish their own native culture, and who liberated Estonia from German and Swedish occupation.

To make the new version of Estonian history more easily memorable, public places such as streets, squares and parks, as well as institutions and factories and even one town (Kuressaare) were renamed in honour of various revolutionaries and prominent Russian figures presiding over this new history. Simultaneously momuments and statues glorifying the past (among them the statue of the folk hero of the Estonian national epic Kalevipoeg) were demolished and replaced by statues that were to be important in this new past. An attempt was made to deprive Estonians of their literary roots, and to replace the Estonian (Latin) writing system by Cyrillic, but this failed due to lack of enthusiasm.

In several functional domains, Estonian was replaced by Russian, due to Estonia's direct subordination to Moscow, for example in banking, statistics, the militia (Soviet police), railway, naval and air transport, mining, energy production, etc. Some functional activities were completely new in Estonia, having no corresponding Estonian terminology and were therefore carried out in Russian (e.g. *Gosplan* (state planning) and KGB). Some were eliminated entirely in Estonian, and for this reason, recreated in Russian (e.g. everything connected with military purposes). Nevertheless, terminological work was carried out continuously at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences in Estonia, thus preserving the language's functional potential.

In an attempt to mechanically mix peoples, and to destroy their (non-Soviet!) ethnic and cultural environment, the Ingrians (already deported from their mother country in the 30's) were driven from Estonia in 1947 (Decree of the USSR Council of Ministers of May 7, 1947), from where they had just settled in 1944–1947, finding the new milieu relatively acceptable in terms of language and culture. In 1951, the final deportation took place, the victims being mostly active church-goers, who were no good at adopting the new ideology. During the same year most of the civil servants who had collaborated with the occupiers in 1940 were arrested, and their jobs taken by more "trustworthy" workers with a Russian background.

During the first decade of occupation, oppressive methods were used to create favourable social and demographic conditions for the destruction of Estonians and their language.

3.3 Areas of immigration

Immigration was favoured as a means of producing trustworthy personnel with "clean papers".

The immigrants settled mainly in:

1) the town of Narva (North-East Estonia), which was bombed by the SU air force and lay in ruins, and where, during the post-war years, resettlement by Estonians was restricted; 2) Sillamäe, an area closed to Estonians as members of a "suspect" ethnic group, due to the uranium mining, and, later, uranium processing; 3) the Kohtla-Järve oil shale mines; 4) the country's capital, Tallinn (large factories and Soviet bases), and 5) the submarine base Paldiski, where Estonians were turned away, and where all monuments reminiscent of Estonia, including cemetery squares, were demolished. Today, Paldiski still remains off limits for Estonians.

In connection with the building of large military airfields, the linguistic balance was violated and interethnic relations ruined in Tartu, Tapa, Haapsalu and Pärnu. The army took vast territories and Estonians were simply expelled from these lands without compensation. Estonians who survived the GULAG were deprived of the right to live in their area of origin.

An ancient Estonian profession, off-shore fishing, was forbidden, the boats broken up and burned. Any protest was severely punished: protesters were often either shot or sent to Siberian prison camps for 25 years, while family members were deported to Siberia, and their relatives were denied access to higher education and to certain jobs.

As a result, despair and cynicism (the so-called social fatigue syndrome) became prevalent among Estonians, accompanied by a rapid decrease in birth rate (even now, the Estonians have not yet regained their pre-war population numbers) and an increase in the number of suicides. In 1959 the proportion of Estonians in Estonia's general population fell to 74.6%.

3.4 The second phase: assimilation policy

The relatively short mild period of the 60's[1], usually associated with N. Khrushchev, brought about a revitalization of Estonian culture. The new generation was

[1]Religious persecution hardened during N. Khrushchev's reign.

socially immune, having acquired the skill of double-thinking and fighting for the Estonian cause under the guise of being devoted to building socialism. But this period did not last long. Even then, some Estonian factory managers, having in mind their material well-being, allowed their factories to grow extensively, and thus supported immigration (the so-called migration-pump effect).

After the 60's, migration diminished, but until the end of the 80's, the number of newcomers exceeded those leaving by 8-9,000 per year, in a population of 1.5 million.

The newcomers have attained a privileged position by getting flats (according to Drobizheva (1984), 86 % of the aliens and only 57 % of the Estonians live in flats with all modern conveniences), as well as enjoying other privileges in towns, mainly because 90 % of the immigrants are townspeople. The result has been a decrease in the percentage of Estonians, falling to 4 % of the population in Narva, 3.2 % in Sillamäe, 21 % in Kohtla-Järve, 2 % in Paldiski and 47 % in Tallinn, the capital.

According to the 1989 census, the ethnic composition in Estonia was as follows: 963,000 Estonians (NB! less than before WW II), 475,000 Russians, 48,000 Ukrainians, 28,000 Belorussians, 16,600 Finns, 4,600 Jews, 4,000 Tartars, 3,500 Latvians and 3,000 Poles. Only two of these ethnic groups — Estonians and Russians — have largely retained their mother tongue. 1/3 of Estonians speak Russian, which is a compulsory school subject, while 15% of Russians are bilingual in Russian and Estonian. These are mainly local (i.e. pre-WW II) Russians.

The third group is composed of *homines sovetici*, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Jews, Germans and Poles, in whose case the official de-ethnization policy has given the best results: only a small minority know their mother tongue, 2/3 have been russified, approximately 7% speak Estonian. The lack of education in their native language has created an underdeveloped sense of national identity, which makes the Estonians' national aspirations difficult for them to accept. Although

Jews, Germans and Swedes, owing to their cultural autonomy, successfully maintained themselves as ethnic groups in the years between the two World Wars, most left Estonia during World War II. As a result, only one fifth of Estonian Germans and Jews are of local origin. The rest came to Estonia seeking better opportunities for emigration to the West (as well as being in fear of pogroms in Russia).

The 300 coastal Swedes have been assimilated to the Estonians, as were some ethnic Finns who changed languages from Finnish to Estonian.

3.5 Attitudes of non-Estonians

The Estonian-based schools were required to teach Russian as a "second native language", whereas the curricula of the Russian-based schools contained little practical Estonian and no Estonian history or geography whatsoever. Due to the unbalanced education system, present-day Estonia consists of two separate communities whose mutual understanding is deficient both linguistically and culturally. Both communities can be classified into several subgroups which differ from each other on two basic parameters: their attitudes, firstly, to Estonian independence, and secondly, to the primary position of the Estonian language on Estonian territory. According to the survey gallup, conducted by D. Mihhailov in 1989, the Russian-speaking population can be divided into three main groups:

1. "Internationalists", representing ideological views of the past, and numbering between 160,000 and 170,000. They are predominately female, with little formal education, and their cultural needs are met by socialist culture. The main characteristics of this group are: an imperial turn of mind (pro-totalitarian Soviet Union), a totally negative attitude to the Estonian language, nation, and culture, and to the national independence of Estonia. They are determined to ensure that Estonia remains part of the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Communist Party.

2. Another faction, equal in size to the "internationalists", is a group who cherish

Estonian culture, ethnicity, language, and the idea of Estonian independence. This group can also be divided into the native Russians of Estonia on the one hand, who avoid participation in interethnic conflicts and live a settled life, and the democratically-minded minorities (including Russians) on the other who, in their effort to maintain their own cultures, appreciate the Estonians' aspirations and problems.

3. The third group, according to D. Mihhailov's data, comprises approximately one-half of the non-Estonians. These people can be characterized first and foremost by their rootlessness, their lack of interest even in their own culture, language and ethnicity, and complete indifference to the indigenous population. Their main motives are economic. This group would accept Estonian national independence if it did not interfere with their economic opportunities. This group's attitude towards Estonian is largely negative because they are unable to speak it. To them, a requirement to know the local language suggests a discrimination of their economic interests.

Opposition to Estonian independence and the Estonian language is decreasing among non-Estonians, as the prospect of repatriation at an opportune moment diminishes.

Along with the advance of democratic tendencies in Estonian society, there is a corresponding decline in the influence of the Russian-speaking Communist Party in Estonia. This has ceased to exist among Estonians, but retains its position in the Soviet Army, KGB, and in the Special Divisions of the Ministry of the Interior (OMON). In effective cooperation with the CP local branch, the latter units commit acts of violence in Estonia, as in other Baltic states. These military operations are accompanied by accusations of linguistic and ethnic discrimination against the Russian-speaking population, the sole aim of which is to legitimate their actions to the general public.

3.6 Linguistic policy in education

During the post-war period, Estonian as a "language with no future", was discriminated against in the curriculum, not only in Russian schools, but also in Estonian educational institutions. Even so, F. Eisen, the then Minister of Education, managed to retain the obligatory status of the Estonian language and literature in Estonian schools. This was achieved by means of the prolongation of the duration of the secondary education given in the Estonian-based "national" schools by one year as compared to the Russian-based schools.

Estonia suffered from a new surge of russification in connection with Decree No 835, issued by the USSR Council of Ministers on 13 October 1978. The document prescribed a considerable enhancement of the quantity as well as quality of Russian taught in the "national schools" at the expense of other subjects. This decree was followed by an upsurge in russifying activities in Estonia. The leaders of the Estonian Communist Party who had been dictating the rules to Estonia in every sphere of life, and the Minister of Education, were replaced by those more fluent in Russian. The new wave of russification was based on a secret decree of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Estonian CP, of 19 December 1978 (Protocol 105, Article 1). That document legalized the priority of Russian over Estonian, declaring Russian the only means of active participation in social life, while teachers were obliged to "teach their pupils to love the Russian language".

This was followed by Decree No 3, issued by the ESSR Council of Ministers on 8 January 1979, and Orders 367-k (on the teaching of Russian at kindergartens) and 713-k (on the further improvement of Russian teaching). According to those documents, the teaching of Russian received a considerable amount of additional material support that enabled the authorities to raise the salaries of Russian language teachers, and to reduce the number of students in the Russian language classes by dividing them into parallel groups. Publications promoting Russian such as the new Russian methods journal "Russkij jazyk v èstonskoj škole" ("The Russian Language in Estonian Schools") as well as

propagandist writings eulogizing the Russian language (as Lenin's mother tongue and a language studied with great interest by Marx and Engels) emerged. A new study programme was adopted that contained additional restrictions on the use and teaching of the Estonian language (adopted by the Council of the ESSR Ministry of Education on April 28, 1983). This document presented the 5 year programme for the preferential teaching of Russian in Estonian schools.

If one recalls that besides these influences there was also the almost impenetrable information barrier — propaganda for Soviet life and the iron curtain policy — one can, perhaps, get an idea of the situation in Estonia in the mid-eighties.

3.7 Phase III: *perestrojka* in Estonia

With the exhaustion of the potential of extensive economy, the arms race and the resulting economic crisis, the Soviet Union began to realize that a radical political change was necessary. This in its turn required an enhancement of the role of individual judgement. The resultant policy, associated with Gorbachov and the watch-words *perestrojka* and *glasnost'*, created a democratic means for ending the discrimination of Estonians in their homeland. This process of democratization evolved from the acceleration of the all-Union economic crisis and took two main directions, namely the restitution of the national sovereignty of Estonia, and the restoration of the right of existence for the languages and cultures of Estonians and other discriminated ethnic groups.

The Supreme Council of the Estonian SSR passed the Declaration of Sovereignty on 16 November 1988. The declaration of Estonian as the official state language in Estonia, and its legalisation as such by a corresponding Constitutional amendment, was passed by the Supreme Council on December 6, 1988. The Language Law was passed on 18 January 1989. The Language Law requires that the holders of certain jobs have a certain proficiency level in both Estonian and Russian. The rest was definitely a political act meant to appease Estonians who protested against discrimination. In order to coordinate the teaching

of Estonian to Russian children, an office called "The Language Centre of Estonia" was founded on 13 March 1989. A Language Protection Committee was also formed at the collective Presidium of the Supreme Council. The task of this Committee was to supervise the execution of the law, but because it functioned as an advisory body only, the Committee's suggestions were largely ignored.

From the point of view of the Communist Party the law had fulfilled its function merely by virtue of being adopted.

3.8 The current linguistic-political situation

The 1990 elections marked the first time Estonians were able to participate in a democratic election, and the result was a change in governmental policy. Even though there were some factors reminiscent of Romania (many Communists and ex-Communists were elected), the majority of the new Supreme Council were pro-Estonian. The Communist Party lost nearly all the legal and executive channels through which it had formerly exercised power over high-level decision-making. The new government followed a more Estonian orientation in its policy. Membership of the discredited party collapsed, and the party split into two, a Russian-speaking imperial-minded CP, and the Estonian-speaking CP with a vague "leftist" ideological platform.

In addition to several other pro-Estonian steps (like the legalization of the national colours, the restoration of the name of the Republic of Estonia, the declaration of Estonia as being in a period of transition to independence (*restitutio ad integrum*), establishment of immigration quotas), a number of decisions were passed in order to restore the Estonian language to its worthy status. In August 1990 the Estonian Government decided to repeal all acts which discriminated against the use of Estonian, and to create a body empowered to supervise the implementation of the Language Law. On 23 November 1990 the National Language Board was established.

The primary functions of the Board are the elaboration of language policy

and language planning strategies, including the organization, supervision, and analysis of the implementation of the Language Law, the improvement of language teaching methods, the supervision of normative terminological and onomastic work, and the pursuit of sociolinguistic studies. The work of the Language Board is, however, impeded by certain political and economic circumstances. The main reason is probably social-psychological, that Estonians now suffer from an inferiority complex, believe that they are a minority, and fear violence from Soviet military units. The economic factor is that people need to cope with the rapidly rising cost of living, and this leaves little room for linguistic or cultural interests. Another factor is biassed evidence from other countries, such as the pro-assimilation melting-pot experience of the USA, or problems in multinational states like Spain (covert) or Yugoslavia (overt). Such evidence, and mis-information on the Baltic states disseminated through Soviet channels, result in a lack of approval of the normalization of the linguistic situation in Estonia. This, in turn, inhibits the Estonians in their own effort to protect the Estonian language and culture in their native land. And yet a change has taken place in the Estonians' consciousness: the socio-psychological status of Estonian has risen, and its use has widened in various functional spheres.

At the same time, the Russian population feels less secure of its future. Its loss of linguistic privileges has caused some stress and apprehension as to the possibility of becoming *personae non gratae* in self-liberating Estonia, simply because one does not know the local language. The Russian population would rather have the Soviet Army restore "the good old order" by force, than learn Estonian. Yet, this kind of thinking is on its way out, due to the government's recent policy of restoring and supporting minority cultures.

History has demonstrated that linguistic problems can be solved only by the advancement of democracy, and by an implementation of the principles of international law, including that of the self-determination of peoples. In the case of the Baltic states, this means an advancement towards an independent society respecting the linguistic rights of each individual.

References

Denison, N. 1977. "Language death or language suicide?" International Journal of the Sociology of Language 12:13-22

Desheriyev, Y. (ed.) 1982. "Jazyk v razvitom socialističeskom obščestve. Jazykove problemy razvitija sistemy massovoj kommunikacii v SSSR." Moscow: Nauka

Drobizheva, L. 1984. "Nõukogude rahvasta vaimne ühtsus". Tallinn.

Dostal, P. 1989, "Regional Interests and the National Question under Gorbachev", Nationalism in the USSR. Problems of nationalities. Amsterdam: Second World Center.

Grin, F. (forthcoming) "The New Estonian Language Law: Presentation with Comments" to appear in Language Problems and Language Planning.

Guboglo, M. (ed.) 1989, "Čto delat'? V pojskax idei soveršenstvovanija mežnacional'nyx otnočenii v SSSR." Moscow.

Guy, G. 1989, "International Perspectives on Linguistic Diversity and Language Rights", Language Problems and Language Planning 13(1): 45–53.

Hint, M. 1990. "Vene keele mõjud eesti keelele 1383-1404". Akadeemia 2(7).

Kala, K. 1991 (forthcoming). "Eesti toostuse areng". To appear in: Akadeemia 3(12)

Kandimaa, R. 1981, "Rahvusliku enesetadvuse ideoloogilisest mõjutamisest 1970.–1980. aastail", Eesti Kommunist, 10: 64–71, 11: 33–42.

Khanazarov, K. 1982, "Rešenie nacionalno-jazykovoj problemy v SSSR", Moscow.

Kulichenko, M. 1981, "Rascvet i sblizhenie nacii v SSSR", Moscow.

Medvedyev, V. 1986, "Osobennosti funkcionirovanija jazykov v uslovijax socializma", Materjaly pjatoj respublikanskoj naučnoi konferencii molodyx lingvistov. Yerevan, 171–172

Meri, M. 1990. "Kenen kieli?" Elias 91(2):13-14

Metelitsa, L. 1982, "Edinstvo internacionalnogo i patriotičeskogo vospitanija", Moskva.

Mihhailov, D. 1989, "Pop-politika i tabeli o rangax, ili kto grešit protiv istiny." Soveckaja Ėstonija, December 23, 1989

Nutt, M. 1989, "Homo soveticus", Looming 2: 221–225.

Rannut, M. 1989. "Šovinismilainetest", Looming 5: 678–680.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. 1988 "Resource power and autonomy through discourse in conflict — a Finnish migrant school strike in Sweden", in Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Jim Cummins, eds., Minority education: from shame to struggle. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 251–277

Viikberg, J. 1990. "The Siberian Estonians and Language Policy", in D. Gorter, J.F. Hoekstra, L. O. Jousman and J. Ytsma, eds. Fourth International Conference on Minority Languages, Vol. 2: Western and Eastern European Papers, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 175-180